

Application No. 10/024,570
Reply dated September 22, 2003
Response to Office Action dated May 20, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (currently amended) A filter arrangement according to claim 4, wherein the first seal assembly is arranged on the filter element in such a way that it fits sealingly against a housing wall within a predefined axial range of motion and wherein the second seal assembly is arranged on the filter element in such a way that it fits sealingly against an axially extending housing wall within a predefined range of motion, wherein the range of motion for the second seal assembly is longer than the range of motion of the first seal assembly.
3. (currently amended) A filter arrangement according to claim 2, wherein the first range of motion is defined by an axial projection against which the first seal assembly fits within the housing between an the inlet for the liquid to be filtered and the return flow channel.
4. (currently amended) A filter arrangement according to claim 2, wherein the first range of motion is defined by a first seal ring that fits against an axially extending projection within the housing between an the inlet for the liquid to be filtered and the return flow channel.
5. A filter arrangement according to claim 2, wherein the first range of motion is defined by a seal member located axially between the filter element and a housing floor, and wherein said seal member extends radially to said axially extending housing wall to define the second range of motion.
6. (currently amended) A filter arrangement according to claim 2, wherein the first seal assembly extends radially outwardly beyond a radial edge of the filter element to

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form a membrane surface in front of an the inlet for unfiltered liquid, so that back flow of the unfiltered liquid is partially blocked.

7. (original) A filter arrangement according to claim 6, wherein said membrane surface cooperates with a stop surface on the housing to partially block back flow of the unfiltered liquid.

8. (currently amended) A filter arrangement according to claim 4, wherein the liquid to be filtered is a fuel or a lubricant for an internal combustion engine of a motor vehicle.

9. (new) A filter arrangement for a liquid comprising:

an inlet;

a filter element that is axially inserted into a filter housing;

a return flow channel;

a first seal assembly which seals the return flow channel during operation of the filter arrangement to prevent fluid communication between an unfiltered side of the filter element and the return flow channel and which is disposed in front of the inlet to reduce back flow of unfiltered liquid from the unfiltered side of the filter element to the inlet of the filter arrangement during operation; and

a second filter assembly, wherein when the filter element is being axially withdrawn from the filter housing, the first seal assembly is initially released to enable return flow of unfiltered liquid into the return flow channel, and as the withdrawal of the filter element continues, the second filter assembly is released to enable return flow of filtered liquid into the return flow channel.